

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraphs beginning at page 8, line 13 with the following amended paragraphs:

Tool execution may start with a request from the user 210 to run a tool 240 on one or more nodes 130. The request may include task information, such as the name of the tool to be run, the location of the tool, the nodes on which to run the tool, and required arguments of the tool, if any. An example of tool execution is described in United States patent application of Lister, Sanchez, Drees, and Finz, entitled "Service Control Manager Tool Execution", serial number 09/813,562, and filed on March 20, 2001, and filed on the same day herewith, which is incorporated herein by reference.

In the next step, the SCM module 110 may retrieve tool definition, node definition and user definition from the domain manager 330 to validate the task information received from the user 210. The domain manager 330, connected to the repository 104, may be contacted to provide tool definition or information about the nodes 130 or the user 210 whenever the clients need to look up a tool 240 or to verify nodes 130. An example of tool definition is described in United States patent application of Lister, Sanchez, Drees, and Finz, entitled "Service Control Manager Tool Definition", serial number 09/800,316, and filed on March 6, 2001, and filed on the same day herewith, which is incorporated herein by reference. The validation of the task information may include checking whether the nodes requested are the managed nodes, whether the tools actually exist, and whether the required arguments of the tool are given. After the request is validated, the SCM module 110 may create a runnable tool object based on the task information and the tool definition. The runnable tool object may encapsulate the tool 240, the task information received from the user 210, and information that may be picked up from the environment, such as the user's name.